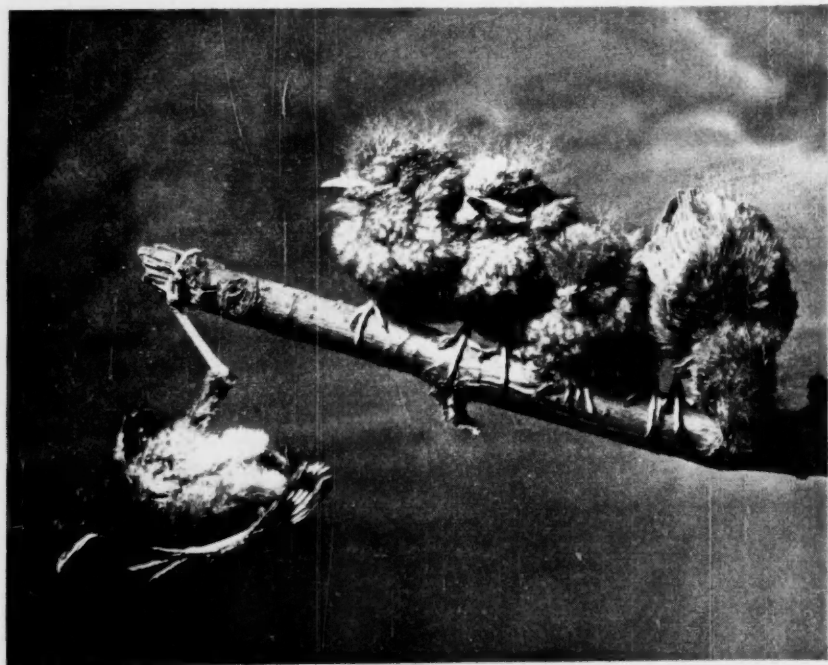


# COMMON GROUND



SPRING-93

ISSUE NO. 1

PRICE: SIXPENCE

# The Council of Christians and Jews

PATRON: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

## OBJECTS

To combat all forms of religious and racial intolerance. To promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews, and to foster co-operation in educational activities and in social and community service.

## Presidents

HIS GRACE THE LORD ARCHBISHOP  
OF CANTERBURY  
THE RT. REV. THE MODERATOR OF  
THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

THE RT. REV. THE MODERATOR OF  
THE FREE CHURCH FEDERAL COUNCIL  
THE VERY REV. THE CHIEF RABBI

## Vice-Presidents

THE RT. HON. LORD COHEN      SIR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE

## Joint Hon. Treasurers

THE RT. HON. THE VISCOUNT CHANDOS, D.S.O., M.C.  
EDMUND DE ROTHSCHILD, T.D.

## Joint Hon. Secretaries

PERCY W. BARTLETT      A. G. BROTMAN, B SC.

## Chairman of Executive Committee

THE VENERABLE C. WITTON-DAVIES, M.A.,  
ARCHDEACON OF OXFORD

## General Secretary

THE REV. W. W. SIMPSON, M.A.

## Organising Secretary

D. WALLACE BELL

## Education Officer

A. I. POLACK, M.A.

## LOCAL COUNCILS

Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Chester, Hampstead, Hull,  
Ilford, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Oxford, Southport,  
South Shields, Sunderland, Willesden.

---

KINGSWAY CHAMBERS · 162A STRAND · LONDON · WC2

TELEPHONE: TEMPLE BAR 9306-7



# COMMON GROUND

VOLUME XII NUMBER 1

SPRING 1958

## MAIN CONTENTS

### The Value of Social Studies in the Promotion of Human Understanding

	Sir John Wolfenden
A Faith beyond the World - - - - -	Hans Liebeschuetz
Freedom of Speech - - - - -	D. Wallace Bell
The Manchester Great Synagogue 1858-1958 - - -	Sidney Salomon
Maimonides - - - - -	Leon Roth

*Signed articles express the views of the contributors which are not necessarily those of the Council of Christians and Jews.*

ONCE MORE the miracle of spring is upon us. The autumn twilight and the dark night of winter give place to longer, brighter days. In the world of nature life is everywhere triumphant over death. "For lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth and the time of the singing of birds is come."

From time immemorial the return of spring has been an occasion for universal rejoicing. Religious rites and myths associated with this season have been found in all parts of the world. There are indeed some who maintain that the Passover, celebrated as it is on the night of the full moon nearest to the spring equinox, was in its earliest beginnings a particular manifestation of this world-wide festival of spring.

But it is not as such that Passover is observed today. Like its Christian counterpart of Easter, so closely linked with it in time and underlying message, it is the celebration of a "mighty act of God," not in the natural world alone, but on the plane of human history. And for that we may be profoundly thankful.

For although the spring is essentially a time of gladness, there are many who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, for whom the appearance of flowers on the earth and the song of birds on the wing are more a mockery than an inspiration. Such were the Hebrew slaves in ancient Egypt, writhing under the lash of Pharaoh's officers. Such were the victims of a modern Pharaoh in Auschwitz, Belsen and many another centre of Nazi tyranny.

#### COMMON GROUND

But such also, in varying degree, are we all. We may question the validity of the first half of Rousseau's dictum that man is everywhere born free, but few will dare question the conclusion that he is everywhere in chains. Among the more obvious instances of this are many forms of racial discrimination, political and economic tyranny that are still to be found in many parts of the world.

But there are other subtler forms of bondage. We live in constant but frequently repressed fear of what we do not know or understand. We see men "as trees walking." We have neither the time, nor in many cases the inclination, to get to know them. The world, the universe in which we live, grow ever more mysterious. There is always so much to learn, so many factors to be taken into account, that in the end there are many who feel with the writer of Ecclesiastes that there is nothing better than to "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

But there, with Hamlet, we may find "the rub." In sheer bravado we may turn our spring festival into some Bacchanalian orgy; we may rush feverishly into some Babel-building activity in an attempt to prove ourselves masters of situations which we hardly dare admit even to ourselves we do not understand; we may talk, even jest, about death as if we did not really mind. But sooner or later the building must collapse, the "morning cometh and the night," and we are left with only the hollow echoes of our own brave speeches to mock us as we face the ultimate mysteries of life and death.

It is precisely to those who know themselves to be in this condition that the message of Passover and Easter is addressed. For each with its own characteristic emphasis, is a festival of deliverance, of liberation and of newness of life; the one for a people in time, the other for the soul in eternity.

But that is not the end of the matter. Indeed, it is only the beginning. For neither Judaism nor Christianity knows anything of a deliverance which requires no response from those who would enjoy its benefits. Both are covenant faiths. When God brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, out of the land of bondage, it was not in order that they might for ever after live in ease and luxury. It was to confront them with the challenge of Sinai, that if they would be his people, they must walk in his ways.

In essence the same is true of Easter, and the validity of both faiths is to be proved only by those who, having seen and believed

"the mighty acts of God," are ready to accept the condition and to give themselves to the task of doing his will in the personal, social, political and economic life of the age in which we live. For the key to the ultimate mystery of the universe lies, not in the ability to measure its infinite distances, to put satellites in an orbit, or to harness the forces of nuclear energy, but in recognition of the existence of a moral order whose compelling force is not the power of a tyrant over his slaves, but the love of a father for his children.

## **The Value of Social Studies in the Promotion of Human Understanding**

SIR JOHN WOLFENDEN

*A summary of Sir John Wolfenden's address at a meeting arranged by the Council of Christians and Jews in the programme of the annual Conference of Educational Associations*

**I**N CONSIDERING any kind of social studies we have first to bear in mind the importance of "level"—the age and experience of those with whom we are dealing. In this lecture I shall narrow down what I understand by social studies to the University level, although this is but a small part of what we are interested in. Social studies inside the University curriculum would include something about social institutions; about the whole range of those contacts that bring people together, in families, classes, social stratification and such like, so that the student may have some hope of getting a fair picture of those various social relationships in which the individual may find himself.

Then, I suppose there would be social psychology: that is, as I understand it, psychology applied to the behaviour of individuals and groups, and the inter-relationship of these individuals with these groups. Next there would be some study of sociological method. There has to be some way of conveying to young people who want to know something about sociology, the methods which the economist, the scientist and the statistician use.

I suggest, too, that you must add some economics, and I certainly hope some ethics. You cannot consider society or human relationships and leave out the question of morals, or the judgment of values.

How does all this match up to the promotion of human understanding? As I go about I am afraid I find more human misunderstanding than human understanding. If we are to remove that misunderstanding, we must begin by ridding ourselves of those hideous abstractions that clutter up the minds of most of us at the present time. We cannot hold an ordinary rational conversation without some of these generalisations slipping in. We find half a dozen maddening examples in every column of our morning paper. We read of "the consumer," "the income group," "the wage earner"; so we describe people who have certain features in common as though they had no other characteristics. This habit is particularly prevalent in connection with young people: "the adolescent," "the fifteen-year-old," and so on. Who is there who has ever seen a "C-stream"? Children may resemble each other in one particular characteristic, and for convenience be grouped together under that heading; but that never justifies making a generalisation beyond that one common feature.

### **Concept of the group**

Today, a much more healthy notion, that of the group, is coming to take the place of the abstract bloodless individual. But there is a danger that even the word group may itself become an abstraction. In fact each individual belongs to many different groups, family, golf club, factory, political party, neighbourhood, and maybe to some minority party out of tune with society. Unless there are to be ragged edges the whole story of the individual cannot be told except as the story of all the groups to which he belongs.

Having rid ourselves of these abstractions, we now come to consider what we mean by the two words "human understanding." I suggest that it starts with mutual sympathy, inside the family, or class, or college, or University or nation. This does not mean mutual sympathy of the uninformed kind, but the enrichment that can come from a positive study of family, social class, social stratification, and from an examination of one's own self as a member of each of these groups. It is the joining together of feeling on the one side and information on the other that is the object of our deliberate study of these social arrangements.

Three things need to be said in this context. First, a study of these concrete groups is a good antidote to theoretical abstractions

about individuals. Secondly, as we try to find out more about social stratification and classification, our eyes are opened to all kinds of indigestible people and groups inside a society which from outside looks fairly homogenous. Thirdly, this kind of study may lead to a form of self-understanding in which we recognise the prejudices we ourselves hold, side by side with those of other people. So often we regard other people as prejudiced and biased, while we think of ourselves as holding convictions, principles and beliefs.

### **Dangers of objectivity**

But there are dangers even about group study. These very notions may themselves slide into being abstractions. It is easy to slip into thinking that the family, the group or the class is in fact a real thing that you can talk about, and that all families, all groups and all classes are recognisably the same. We must remember that all such universals exist only as they are embodied in individuals.

The second danger is that an intellectual grasp of these concepts may be thought to be enough in itself. Information in itself is not enough and can be dangerous if its possessor thinks that it is. One is not necessarily a better Christian for being an expert theologian, nor a better citizen for knowing how the rates are spent. Knowledge or technique is not enough; it is one half of what is needed. Sympathy is the other half. One half is science, one half is art.

The third danger is a sinister one. It is that by looking carefully at relationships within the social framework and group, we may get so scientific, so "dispassionate" that all our social contacts become self-conscious. It is easy to be objective and dispassionate about measurements in physics and mathematics, but if we start trying to be objective about social relationships in which we ourselves are involved, there is the danger that we may never be able to enter into a relationship spontaneously. We may all the time be wondering how we look doing this.

### **The impenetrable core**

Human understanding rests primarily on human relationships, and these are, in my view, almost the only things that matter. They matter because the only ultimately valuable thing in the universe is the immortal soul. The whole purpose of social science is that by this kind of study, by submitting to this kind of discipline, by trying to see the inter-relationship between individuals and groups, we may

## COMMON GROUND

in fact increase our own insight and get more nearly alongside the other person whom we are trying to know.

But there is one final fact to be taken into account about all human beings. When we have done all that we can about mutual sympathy and about human understanding, when we have learned all the skills, techniques, and methods, and when we have brought these two streams fully together, I think it may well be true that in the last resort in each and every one of us there is an impenetrable inmost core that nobody can ever reach; an ultimate aloneness on which no knowledge skill or technique can ever trespass.

## A faith beyond the World

HANS LIEBESCHUETZ

*This article summarises an address by Dr. Liebeschuetz to the London Society of Jews and Christians, in a series of lectures on "The Meaning and Goal of Human History." Dr. Hans Liebeschuetz, Ph.D., M.A., is Reader in Medieval History at the University of Liverpool. In our last issue we printed a corresponding article on the Christian view of history, by Canon Edward Carpenter.*

THE GENERAL background to the development of the Jewish view of history is a religious idea, which found its expression everywhere in the cities of ancient mediterranean civilisation and so can still be traced behind the ruins of the Acropolis and the Parthenon in Athens. The idea was that the god and the town are one: the god living in the temple guarantees the existence of the town. This idea influenced the Israelites when they settled in Palestine, and it is against this idea that the prophetic message and the prophetic interpretation of the working of history are mainly directed.

After 1,000 B.C.E. comparatively independent development was possible in Syria and Palestine because neither Egypt nor Babylonia reached into those parts. But this period was brought to an end in the eighth century by the rising power of Assyria, and the history of the next centuries was formed by strife for possession of Syria and Palestine.



Such was the world which the Hebrew prophets faced; and their conception of history is really their answer to this challenge. The force of their answer can be heard in the words of Amos when he went to the royal temple in Bethel and declared that the temple and its services were worthless, since they did nothing to advance the real task of Israel and of mankind. The prophet foresaw that Israel's world, the sanctuaries in Bethel and Jerusalem, would be destroyed. But he knew that this destruction would not mean the destruction of Israel's God. On the contrary, it was the extreme proof that God was Ruler of the world. He knew that the fundamental covenant between God and His people had been broken. For him, the essential factor in religion was social justice and moral rectitude. He saw no other way out of the corruption of society, especially of the ruling class, than the destruction of the whole of that society and of the state. And he believed that only after that destruction would there be something worth while.

Later, when Assyria had been defeated and Babylon had taken its place, there was Jeremiah in Jerusalem itself. He told his contemporaries: You trust in lying words, saying "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." But the temple is no basis for a good and lasting existence. God may require the destruction of the temple in order to leave only a remnant of just people, who would be ruled not by an ambitious despot, but by wise and considerate "shepherds." The prophet criticised the diplomatic finesse of the king's advisers who tried desperately to save the small nation by playing out the great powers against each other. The shrewd realism of his judgments was brought about by a religious conviction, which rejected all politics in the orbit of the oriental monarchy. He had to pay the price of his radicalism. All his life he remained a lonely figure involved in an endless struggle against public opinion. His vocation formed his fate; he was the great Outsider.

This theme was taken up by the great prophet of the Exile whose writings are preserved in the second section of the Book of Isaiah. He created the famous figure of the servant of God through whom mankind will finally be saved. That servant is a man who is despised and persecuted, suffering and finally killed. Traditional Jewish interpretation identifies the servant of God with the ideal Israel—Israel as it ought to be. This interpretation of the Messiah as a suffering servant became a classic of interpretation of Jewish history.

The Jews are a people with a task, not in the world but, in a sense, beyond the world.

What does this ideal mean to modern Jews? At the end of the eighteenth century Jewry re-entered the world after the prolonged Middle Ages in which it had been more separated from it than ever before. The great expansion of the world which was taking place with the new methods of production and world commerce created room for the Outsider, and the Jews began to play their part in it. The Bible was again being read in a world seemingly pliable by human reason and planning, and the Messianic idea had become the idea of progress by man's endeavour.

In the second half of the nineteenth century neo-Kantianism was an important school of philosophy, and Hermann Cohen, professor at the University of Marburg, was a leader of it. He was interested in the basis of human knowledge and of human action, and with Kant he emphasised the importance of reason as a force which, with the use of mathematics, would reshape the scientific world-picture and, he believed, change human action.

### **Inspiration of the Prophets**

Cohen had a strong Jewish traditional background, which at the beginning of his career he cherished mainly as a pious memory, as a link with his father's house. But when in the course of his Kantian studies, and later while building his own system of philosophy, ethical and religious problems came to the forefront of his mind, he found in prophetism his strongest source of inspiration. He felt that human life should be formed by the ideal behaviour which human reason is capable of discovering, and he found that the God of the prophets is the guarantor of human development. Thus he embraced the historical world-picture of the prophets and made himself its messenger to the world.

How he brought together this Jewish legacy with his belief in the great tradition of Idealism in Western civilisation is shown in a lecture which he wrote a few years later. He compared the Republic of Plato, whom he admired as the founder of philosophical ethics, with the prophetic interpretation of history. Plato had sketched his programme for the world with the desire to create a community that would last, whereas, Cohen said, the real task of mankind is to create a development. He quoted the belief of the prophet Jeremiah

in the divine inspiration of man against Plato's belief in the permanent inequality of man.

However, the real conflict which dominated the later period of Cohen's life was not with Plato. He respected given facts as a starting-point, both in science and in human action, but he would not recognise them as an end in themselves. He was a patriotic man, but power had a meaning for him only as an instrument for the betterment of mankind. It was essentially this attitude that alienated him more and more from his German contemporaries and linked him in growing intimacy with his own people, whom he felt in the depth of his heart as the genuine guardian of the messianic tradition.

### **Role of the Outsider**

This fact that being a Jew means being an Outsider was taken up by Cohen's most important pupil in the Jewish field, Franz Rosenzweig. Rosenzweig went through a serious religious crisis in which he had been uncertain whether to continue as a Jew or become a Christian. He had decided that it was his duty to remain a Jew. He accepted the fate of being an Outsider, but he saw it as a great task laid upon the Jews.

Judaism is not in history; it aims beyond history. The Jew looks beyond history to God for full righteousness. And the fact that he is a Jew and lives in the Jewish community is a sign of his alliance with God, a sign that religiously he cannot accept the world. His idea of human progress goes beyond the world.

Rosenzweig tried to strengthen his position by interpreting the history of the Jewish Faith itself. He was of the opinion that the great work of interpretation in the Mishnah and Gemara had made Judaism timeless. The core remained the same; there was no real development. But it did not exclude changes in adaption—for Rosenzweig was not an Orthodox Jew.

This, too, was characteristic of Rosenzweig's attitude towards Zionism, a new force in Germany. He was convinced that Palestine would be important for the vitality of Jewish existence. But it would not really change the problem of Jewish religion, for the Jewish religion in Palestine would be beyond this world just as it was in the diaspora. If indeed it should be changed by this "normalisation" of life, then Judaism as a religious force would no longer exist.

This interpretation of Rosenzweig probably seems less convincing and certainly less brilliant than the great formulation of Hermann Cohen. Cohen was an idealist, believing that his idealism would come down to earth, that the Messiah would come in the foreseeable future. Rosenzweig, however, had seen in 1913 that this belief was an illusion. His conception was that we cannot formulate a religious programme for this world of challenges and problems. We had to learn that the planning of society is dependent for its success on the technicalities of economic organisation; that it is used in our time as the most forceful means of power-politics. We see more clearly than ever before that the history of mankind is only a part of the history of nature. True, natural science shows us now a process within time-limits, but it fills milliards of years, whereas human history covers only fragments of such periods, without losing its universal significance. All that makes it very difficult to identify religion with a programme of social progress. Therefore the view pronounced by Rosenzweig in 1913, placing reliance only on the soul of man, which can look beyond reality and beyond history, to God as the core of everything, despite everything—that perhaps is something which we can usefully offer to the world.

## Freedom of Speech

D. WALLACE BELL

*In our last issue Percy W. Bartlett wrote on "The Basis of Human Rights," introducing a series of articles in Common Ground on the "Four Freedoms," to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The next issue will contain an article on "Freedom of Worship."*

A BOY SCOUT visiting Britain for the 1957 Jamboree had been given by his father a list of places in London which he should try to see. High on the list was Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park. "Here," his father had told him, "there is greater freedom of speech than anywhere else in the world." The Scout was, therefore, somewhat puzzled when he heard one soap-box orator protesting that there is no real freedom of speech in Britain, "because," he explained, "no-one would stop to listen to what he had to say."

Nor is that protest completely pointless. Speech is communication, and implies a relationship between speaker and hearer, and the

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH

right to freedom of speech involves both parties. Both have privileges, and both have responsibilities. The right to express oneself freely, in the written and in the spoken word, is today recognised as essential to the full development of human personality. But self-expression without an audience is at best no more than a release mechanism for psychological inhibitions; and most people would probably share the frustration of the Hyde Park orator. It is an empty freedom to be allowed to address a field of sheep. Once an audience is recognised, however, speech becomes not merely a form of self-expression, but a means of impressing one's own personality on someone else. One must take into account the effect of what one is saying, on the listener. Here then is the first limitation to freedom of speech.

### **Abuse of freedom**

One should not deliberately deceive, either by asserting as fact what one knows to be false, or by advancing a theory or point of view which one believes to be invalid. To do so is to abuse freedom of speech, whether in political life, in business, or in personal relationships. One can, of course, often deceive another person, or a large number of people, with impunity. It is done every day, deliberately and with calculation. Many of those who practice such deceit would uphold their right to do so under the banner of freedom of speech. But such freedom, far from being a basic right essential to the full expression of human personality, has become a means of suppressing the personality of another. To say this is not to decry legitimate argument about either fact or theory. It is in the nature of things that different people have differing viewpoints and reach different conclusions, and it is part of man's search for truth that in every sphere of life he should express his own convictions and seek to convince others of their rightness. It is from the dialogue between people with differing views that a fuller understanding of truth emerges.

Nor does freedom of speech imply a right to use coercion to get one's own views accepted by others. Physical and mental torture as the means of enforcing religious or political beliefs were, we thought, things of the past, but they have been revived in the twentieth century and used perhaps more widely than ever before. But there are other methods of coercion than those of the concentration

## COMMON GROUND

camp and the brain-washing laboratory. Even those countries that pride themselves on their freedom still use fear as an argument—internationally, in the inter-continental ballistic missile and hydrogen war-head; internally, in the various manifestations, not only American, of "McCarthyism." At a lower level are the commercial advertisements that prey on fear, for instance the fear of illness, and may even create the very ills for which they profess to offer a cure. Now we are threatened with an even more insidious form of coercion, in what is called "subliminal" advertising—the implanting of an idea without our knowledge at the sub-conscious level of our minds. This technique is at present limited to television and the cinema screen, for it depends upon a split-second visual image of such short duration that it cannot be "seen" by the conscious part of our mind, but is registered by our brain at a sub-conscious level. With all other forms of advertising and persuasion we are free to accept or reject the arguments put forward, and even coercion we are usually able to recognise as such. The nature of subliminal advertising, however, is such that we cannot know that we have been subjected to it, and when the suggestions it implants in our sub-conscious minds eventually reach the level of the conscious they seem to us to be our own thoughts and convictions.

### **Ends do not justify means**

Coercion is an abuse of freedom of speech whether it is used to propagate a "bad" idea or a "good" one. Men have sometimes been burned at the stake for the highest motives; and today, given the financial resources, churches and synagogues could probably be filled by subliminal advertising; but an essential human freedom would be violated.

A further restriction is that freedom of speech does not carry the right to say things that cause damage, either to the listener or to a third party. This limitation is to some extent recognised in personal issues in the law of slander and libel and in action for defamation of character, and in matters affecting the whole community in the laws of sedition and treason. There are, however, many instances of the abuse of free speech in this direction for which there is no legal remedy. The controversial question of so-called group libel is one example; rumour-mongering is another; while the laws relating to obscenity are held by many to fail in their main purpose of protecting

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH

the community from moral corruption. The criterion in all these cases is again that freedom is abused when it is used in such a way as to have an adverse effect on another human personality.

### **Duty to listen**

Freedom, in fact, is at every point matched by responsibility. Nor are the duties and obligations attendant on freedom of speech limited to the speaker. The listener, who is also essential to the chain of communication, has certain definite responsibilities. Listening and speaking are indeed alternate roles for the same person, and the rules governing both characters must serve the same purpose. As a listener he must be prepared to listen. What is more, he must listen not only to those whose views are the same as his own, but—a much harder task—to those with whom he strongly disagrees. And his listening should be of the same calibre as his speaking, a real participation in a dialogue. If he does less, he is denying to others a right which he claims for himself.

The listener has also to form a judgment about what he hears. His mind should not be a sponge that absorbs every new idea without question. Rather he must discriminate, accepting or rejecting other people's views, not on the basis of whether they fit in with his own preconceived ideas, but on their own merits. He must, therefore, be able to think for himself, and he must have a standard of judgment against which he can assess what he hears and reads.

Hence freedom of speech imposes obligations also on the community. Society must ensure that its members are able to think objectively, by giving them the kind of education that will enable them to do so. It must see that, on the one hand, people recognise their own responsibilities in exercising their right to freedom of speech, and on the other that as listeners they are equipped to distinguish between truth and falsehood, between right and wrong.

### **Pressure of conformity**

Actually no society ever accords full freedom of expression to its members. Freedom of speech depends upon freedom of thought, and in every society there are inevitably certain thought patterns that are accepted throughout the community. Only exceptionally is a man able to break through the thought patterns of the society into which he is born; and such a man is usually regarded as a crank. Similarly every established society has certain social habits that are commonly

## COMMON GROUND

accepted without question, and that exert a tremendous pressure towards conformity. For the vast majority of people such limitations to their freedom of thought, and hence of expression, are never seen as such, for in the nature of things they do not know that they exist. They cannot conceive the possibility of thinking in other terms, or of living according to completely different standards, from those of the society around them. The limitations may, however, be very real. The totalitarian state, using all the modern methods of education and propaganda, is today capable of imposing severely restricted thought patterns on its members, especially on its children. But under other regimes almost as great a limitation may be brought about without any central direction, by the sheer pressure towards conformity, finding expression through all the media of mass communication and suggestion. The test of tolerance in a society is perhaps whether it allows freedom of expression to those few who challenge the accepted basic thought patterns, or who question the common social habits of the community.

### **Challenge of subversion**

It is sometimes suggested that a society which allows, and even encourages, freedom of speech in all other respects should not permit the advocacy of views which if generally accepted would destroy that freedom. Thus communist propaganda is prohibited in some democratic countries. There may be a case for such restriction as a matter of short-term expediency, but as a long-term policy it involves a negation of the principle on which democracy itself is founded, and in the end destroys the very freedom which it seeks to preserve. The real safeguard of freedom of speech lies not in the suppression of distasteful views, but in the education of the community in the ability to think clearly, so that subversive policies are freely examined and freely rejected.

Freedom of speech may be a fundamental human right, but it contains the germs both of its own destruction, and of its preservation. Society must choose between the two; and if the choice be for freedom it can never be final, for freedom is achieved and maintained only at the price of constant striving. Even Hyde Park has a place in that effort.



## The Manchester Great Synagogue 1858-1958

SIDNEY SALOMON

*This year the Manchester Great Synagogue celebrates its centenary. Common Ground has therefore invited Sidney Salomon, whose father was for forty-seven years Minister of the synagogue, to tell the story of the Synagogue's first hundred years, and of the part which his father's ministry played in its history and in the development of the Manchester Jewish community. Mr. Sidney Salomon is a barrister, and is Press and Public Relations Officer of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.*

FOR A SYNAGOGUE to celebrate its centenary is perhaps not unique but the celebration to be held in Manchester this year which commemorates the consecration in 1858 of the Great Synagogue, an edifice which stands today not much altered since it was first opened, has claims to more than usual mention. Though Jewry in Manchester as in other places has shifted its centre of gravity, it is still the Cathedral Synagogue which was for so long the focus of Jewish life in that city.

The Great Synagogue has during the long years of its existence had only three ministers. Its pulpit was first occupied by Dr. D. M. Isaacs whose congregation was actually in Liverpool but who took the service in Manchester every fortnight until 1868. Dr. Isaacs was a man of outstanding ability, a distinguished preacher and a scholar, and one of the first Jewish ministers to preach regularly in English. He died in 1878, but it was not until 1880 that Rabbi Dr. Berendt Salomon was appointed to the vacancy.

Dr. Salomon, who was by birth a Dane, had taken his Rabbinical degree at the world famous seminary of Dr. Israel Hildesheimer, then still in its original home at Eisenstadt in Hungary, and his Ph.D. at the University of Copenhagen. There are certain aspects of my father's Rabbinate of forty-seven years at Manchester which must appeal particularly to the readers of *Common Ground* and the Council of Christians and Jews. Strongly orthodox in his principles but fundamentally broadminded, he was a firm believer in the importance of good relations between members of different faiths. He was able to prove throughout his long life that one could work in harmony with others without endangering the basis of the Jewish faith. There is little doubt that Dr. Salomon would have been a founder member of the Council of Christians and Jews had such an organisation then been in existence. As it was he was a member of the "Mini-

sters' Fraternal" of clergy of all denominations, and was for a term its Chairman.

Dr. Salomon had a vocation for the Ministry. He had originally intended to take up medicine, and had indeed passed the first two examinations for that subject when he felt so strong a desire to become a Rabbi that he abandoned his original studies, to the delight of his parents who were profoundly religious. Possessed of private means, after taking his degrees he spent some time in travelling, in the course of which he came to England. As a guest preacher he delivered sermons in several London Synagogues, being one of the first, if not indeed the first Ashkenazi to preach in a Sephardic Synagogue. It was this fortuitous visit to England that led my father to apply for the vacancy in Manchester and the pulpit of the Great Synagogue was the first and only post he held.

Dr. Salomon rapidly made his name both as a preacher and as a public worker. As time went on he was responsible for the foundation of a number of important organisations, ranging from the Society for the Diffusion of Hebrew Knowledge to the Soup Kitchen for the Jewish Poor, which in fact was open to all creeds.

### **The accepted leader**

My father was able to establish his position in so short a time because he based it on the status of the Continental Rabbis, who were accepted without challenge as the spiritual head and guide of their own communities. It was to the credit and honour of his honorary officers that they readily accepted this point of view, and he was soon their respected and also their beloved leader and guide. In addition he was the most kindhearted of men and ready to help all, especially the young in the attainment of their ambitions.

The Jewish community in Manchester was comparatively small when Dr. Salomon first came to it. There were seven Synagogues including, what was then unique in provincial Jewish communities, a Reform as well as a Sephardic congregation. When he reached the end of his pastorate the community had increased to 30,000, as a result of immigration during the dread years of Russian pogroms as well as of the natural increase in population, and the number of Synagogues to more than thirty. It was in this period that Manchester gained the reputation, which it never lost, of being a united community.

## THE MANCHESTER GREAT SYNAGOGUE

Of particular interest were my father's relations with non-Jews. His attitude was early defined when on the death of Dean Stanley in July 1881 he referred in a sermon to the Dean's famous lectures on the Jewish Church, and emphasised the Talmudical saying that "A pious man of every creed has a part in Eternal bliss." He followed this precedent on similar occasions when other great men, including Thomas Spurgeon, passed away. That Dr. Salomon's name was already becoming well known in Manchester was clearly shown when in the following year both the Bishop of Manchester and a leading local M.P., General Fielden, in deploring the decline of church attendances referred to similar statements made by my father regarding the Synagogue. Dr. Salomon was soon accepted by the citizens of Manchester as the representative of Jewish life, and there was no organisation or committee dealing with social or charitable causes in which he was not asked to participate.

### Protest against persecution

In addition to being an outstanding preacher Dr. Salomon had a flair for letter writing and became a prolific correspondent not only in the *Jewish Chronicle* but in the *Manchester Guardian*. Those were the days when the persecution of Russian Jewry reached its height, and letters from my father from his official address in Great Synagogue Chambers created considerable interest and were frequently the subject of comment in leading articles in the *Guardian*. In one letter which made a considerable sensation he revealed a statement made by the King of Denmark to the Chief Rabbi of that country. The Chief Rabbi had asked the King to appeal to his daughter, the mother of Tsar Nicolas II, on behalf of the Jews in Russia, and the King had replied, that it was impossible for him to do so as she was such an antisemite! Even today many people remember the world-wide reaction when in 1912 the Russian authorities charged a poor tailor in Kiev, Mendel Beilis, with ritual murder. My father was responsible for the first great public meeting in this country to protest against this shocking revival of medieval barbarism. It was held at the Town Hall and was addressed by religious leaders of every denomination. But the persecution of all creeds touched him deeply, particularly that of the Armenians. He later aligned the Great Synagogue in support of the League of Nations as well as of disarmament, although he maintained that to



*The Great Synagogue, Manchester*

## THE MANCHESTER GREAT SYNAGOGUE

talk of disarmament was academic until there was more unity among the various creeds and nationalities.

### **Appeal to the Pope**

One of Dr. Salomon's letters, not intended for the Press, though subsequently published, was of particular interest. In 1882 Cardinal Manning was to attend a Papal Assembly in Rome. The persecution of the Jews in Poland was at its height and pogroms occurred continually. My father wrote to the Cardinal on the eve of his departure, begging him to entreat the Pope to issue a Pastoral letter recommending his clergy to advocate from the pulpit the protection of the Jews. Manning replied that though he feared he could do little he would not fail to bear this letter in mind. Three weeks afterwards an Encyclical letter from the Pope on the suggested lines was read from the pulpits of all Roman Catholic Churches in Poland.

Dr. Salomon did not hesitate to make known his dislikes as well as his likes. He was strongly opposed to conversionist activities, and to any form of discrimination. He was active in all matters which might affect the security or status of Jews as British citizens, such as the Aliens' Bills and the Shops Hours Act which in its early form tended seriously to discriminate against Jewish shopkeepers. Nor did he fail to attack the British Government for its interpretation of the Balfour Declaration and its administration of Palestine as the Mandatory power, while the Government's inability to face up to the Russian Government in its refusal of visas to British citizens of Jewish faith caused him disquiet.

### **Critics met**

No man with strong views is without his critics. Thus the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1926 criticised Dr. Salomon's participation in a civic service to celebrate the re-opening of the Royal Exchange. The order of prayers had been submitted to him: it consisted of psalms and the Lord's Prayer, which he maintained could be accepted by members of every creed who believed in the Deity. This criticism was met by a hail of protests from members of the Manchester community, who had full confidence in their respected Rabbi's judgment; and my father in his reply pointed out that he did not

regard such invitations as personal but as a tribute to the part played by the Jewish Community in the City of Manchester, and that he felt bound to accept invitations, even of a religious character, if there was no item to which a conforming Jew could object.

At a gathering in the Town Hall to mark my father's eightieth birthday in 1926, tributes were paid not only by his co-religionists but by the Lord Mayor who presided, and by other leaders of social and public work in Manchester. The *Manchester Guardian* wrote on that occasion: "When the voice of Manchester Jewry has thought fit to make itself heard on any matter in which Jews and Christians have common aspirations the voice has come from Dr. Salomon . . . It falls to the lot of few men to exercise the whole of their ministerial charge in one congregation, and the best tribute that can be paid to him is this, that among those who have known him best, his career has been one that has commanded increasing affection and regard."

#### **A city's tribute**

Two years later my father passed peacefully away in his sleep, having performed his duties practically to the end. Manchester paid its last tribute. The flag was flown at half-mast at the Town Hall. The Lord Mayor and other prominent citizens followed the coffin into the Synagogue, borne on the shoulders of its present and past honorary officers, a tribute rarely paid in the Jewish faith. Then the long cortege made a detour to pass as many Synagogues as possible, all of which had their doors wide open and their interiors lit up.

The vacancy at the Great Synagogue was not filled until 1933 when a distinguished scholar and preacher, Rabbi Israel Abrahams, who had been the minister of the Shepherds Bush Synagogue was appointed. He held the appointment only for four years, however, leaving in 1937 to become the Chief Rabbi of Cape Town. Today services at the Great Synagogue are taken by two Readers, but it is still the "seat" of the Communal Rabbi and is used for official services, including this year one to celebrate its Centenary.

Few Synagogues have through their Rabbis occupied so commanding a position in any community, and no history of Manchester Jewry would be complete which did not recognise the status which the Great Synagogue held in the public and social life of that great city.

## Maimonides

LEON ROTH

*An appreciation of the significance of Maimonides' philosophy and of his influence on Western thought, by Dr. Leon Roth, M.A., D.Phil., F.B.E., who was from 1928-1953 Professor of Philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.*

**M**OSSES MAIMONIDES (son of Maimon) was born at Cordova in south Spain in 1135 and died at Fostat (the modern Cairo) in 1204. He thus ante-dates Thomas Aquinas by about a century but comes after the great Arab philosophers; the last and most famous of them, Averroes, was slightly his senior. But whereas Maimonides, under the name of "Rabbi Moyses," was recognised by Aquinas as a leader in the defence of religious faith, Averroes (or, it would be fairer to say, some of Averroes' opinions as understood by some of his Christian followers) was seen by him as the source and centre of religious error.

The reason for this differentiation was that whereas Averroes followed the plain doctrine of Aristotle as he understood it, Maimonides was more critical and adapted it to his needs; and his needs were the needs of a religious faith nurtured in the tradition of the Hebrew Bible. Thus his work was one of reconciliation and adaption. He brought "religion" and "science" together; and he did this by showing that the God of religion is the God of truth, not a refuge for ignorance but the perfection of knowledge.

Yet he remains the heavenly Father to be loved with all heart and mind. For through his works we are stirred to wonder and admiration and reverence and love. Knowledge and love, says Maimonides, go together; and "as is the measure of the knowledge, so is the measure of the love." In the highest worship the rational and emotional are fused into one. The emotion and love may come primarily from religion, the reason and knowledge primarily from science; but they can join in all sincerity because science is only the detailed display of the principle inherent in religion. Monotheism, the doctrine of unity of source, entails a single standard for both logic and ethics. It means one order both in the physical and in the moral world: one God, one goodness, one truth. It was with these and similar ideas in his mind that Maimonides set out on his historic task. For him, as for all medieval thinkers, knowledge meant Aristotle; and in his attitude to Aristotle he was both devotedly dependent and gloriously independent. Aristotle showed him the "how"; the "what" he had

learned from the Bible. And so he was enabled to adopt a similar attitude to the Bible too, an attitude devotedly dependent, gloriously *independent*. He was prepared to interpret (his critics said: interpret away) anything in the Bible which was repugnant to his reason. But the great ends, God, freedom and immortality, remained, and with them the great means: knowledge and love. He used all the tools he could find—psychology, anthropology; philology, exegesis; physics, metaphysics—in order to make the Bible acceptable; and he showed his greatness by his never *mis*-using them, as indeed he did not *mis*-use the Bible. He never lost sight of the essentials. The God of the Bible may not be exactly the Aristotelian “Unmoved mover,” and his highest activity may not be that of “Thought thinking itself.” And yet Maimonides considered that they were not incompatible; and after offering allegiance to these and other Greek doctrines could yet close his philosophical treatise, the *Guide for the Perplexed*, with an exposition of the verse of Jeremiah (9, 23) which affirms that human wisdom lies not in the abstract knowledge of the nature of God, but in the realisation that God “delights in” (that is, requires of man) the doing of “kindness and justice *on this earth*.”

### **Near indeed is God**

This old Hebraic theme, the more impressive because it comes at the end of an exaltation of Greek wisdom, is reinforced by an emphatic re-statement, in a simple Hebrew distich, of the full implication of montheism: “Near indeed is God to each one who calls, if he calls in truth and turns to him. Near is he to all who look for him, if they go straight and turn not aside.”

In the history of philosophy Maimonides is known for the *Guide for the Perplexed*. In the literature of Judaism he is famous also for work of another kind. As a young man he had composed commentaries on the standard works of Jewish tradition; and when he had completed these he wrote (originally, he says, for his own use) a digest of his own which itself became standard. This digest (the Repetition of the Law) is remarkable for two things. The first is that its whole first book (out of the total fourteen) is devoted to a brief survey of the general foundations of theology, ethics, psychology and religion. The second is that it is completely comprehensive and includes every item of Jewish moral, civil, criminal and ceremonial law. The significant thing is that these two characteristics are



presented together. The temporal is cradled in the eternal. The precepts of the Law, with all their present rigor and historical background, are shown to manifest principles which are relevant universally.

Yet for man the eternal is expressed in the temporal. The religious end can be achieved only through action in time and place. Religion is fundamentally spiritual education; and spiritual education, like all education, is not an abstract idea existing in a vacuum but a training of human beings through specific means for a definite end.

### Teachers of humanity

It is noteworthy that for Maimonides the hero of Judaism was Abraham. The book of Genesis told of Abraham leaving his native country by God's command in order to seek out another which would be indicated to him; but in the course of the narrative it uses a phrase (*Genesis* 12, 5) which is usually understood to mean "the substance which they had acquired in Haran" but which says literally: "and the souls which they (had) made there." Jewish legend interpreted this in the sense of religious conversion; and it tells many a story about Abraham's awakening to the recognition of the principle of montheism in the idolatrous environment in which he was born, and his attempts to bring his family and neighbours to a truer knowledge of the nature of God. In the same spirit Maimonides sees Abraham and his family (and, afterwards, Moses) as teachers appointed to educate (or re-educate) the human race in the "way of God." "For I (God) have known him (Abraham) in order that he should command his children and his household after him that they should keep the way of God, to do justice and judgment." This verse (*Genesis* 18, 19) is for Maimonides the "charter" of Jewry. It affirms Jewry's status and responsibility in the world. And it indicates, too, the aim of human history, which is the bringing up of all humankind to the knowledge of God and the following in practice of God's "way." Judaism is thus an instrument for the regeneration of humanity; and Jewry's claim to existence is that it is the representative and exemplification of Judaism. In Maimonides' own phrase, Jewry was fashioned to be one "whole people knowing God."

The end of the education of the human race is that the whole of humankind should become "one people knowing God." In that

#### COMMON GROUND

future age, the age which Maimonides, following the prophets, identified with the age of the Messiah, the knowledge of God will fill the heart and mind not of one family only of the families of the earth, but of all of them together as one.

This consummation is not entirely in the far future. Glimpses of it may be seen here and now; and in some remarkable letters written to proselytes to Judaism Maimonides gives vivid expression to his basic conception of the nature of the vocation of Jewry. Thus in one of them, to a proselyte who felt himself inferior to a Jew "by blood," he writes: "Let not thy descent be light in thine eyes. If *our* descent is from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, *thy* descent is from *God himself*;" and he calmly adds, in rebuke of the racialism which is always with us, the verse of Isaiah: "One shall say, I am *the Lord's*; *another* shall call himself by the name Jacob."

It would be foolish in a concluding paragraph to approach the detail of Maimonides' religious philosophy or to discuss the extent of its "influence" on Christian theology. It is generally agreed that Aquinas followed his lead in some central doctrines, but exactly how far is a matter on which specialists disagree. What is noteworthy is that Aquinas, whether he "borrowed" much or little, is never ashamed of accepting a suggestion from a known representative of another faith. It is only the moderns who are miserly with their ideas, perhaps because they have so few of them. Medieval thinkers were more generous. They gave as freely as they took. They felt the greatness of their common heritage, and they realised the necessity of defending it intelligently.

And they used the best intellectual tools of their time. They were one in their respect for Aristotle; and in this common use of a "heathen" philosopher they learned to set out the common basis of faith. They knew and respected one another's differences and yet joined together in the great search; and they tried to follow out not only the way *to*, but also the way *of*, the common Father of all.

#### ONE GOD—THE WAYS HE IS WORSHIPPED AND SERVED

*A series of four filmstrips depicting the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Free Church and Jewish Ways of Worship.*

Price for complete set, including full lecture notes : 25/- inc. postage

## Causerie

CANON A. W. EATON

I AM GLAD to see that the second series of B.B.C. "Lift up your hearts" talks by our General Secretary has now been published. SOME FESTIVALS JESUS CELEBRATED by the Rev. W. W. Simpson, published by Independent Press Ltd., is a worthy companion to the earlier series, "Some Prayers Jesus Prayed." Many listeners found that both series of talks helped them to understand more of the religious background of the Christian story. If you heard the talks you certainly want to have them in print; and if you missed the broadcasts there is even more reason for you to get a copy!

\* \* \* \*

Encouraging news reaches me of the strengthening of links with COUNCILS OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS IN EUROPE. Recently the secretaries of our own and of the French, German and Swiss Councils spent two days together in Paris comparing notes on the situation and the work in their respective countries. They also worked out plans for continuing liaison. Incidentally I like the name under which our French friends are working. They call themselves: "L'Amitié Judéo-Christienne." What an eloquent word is Friendship!

\* \* \* \*

Twenty years ago the name of MUNICH acquired a most unhappy, indeed one might almost say sinister, connotation in our language. How good it is then to learn in March this year the German Councils of Christians and Jews are holding a congress in Munich. The central theme of the gathering is: "The past as our problem" and papers are being read by distinguished German leaders on Anti-semitism, Nationalism and Totalitarianism. I am happy to learn that we are to be represented at this congress. We shall all look forward to hearing more about it later.

\* \* \* \*

To expect anyone who knows PROFESSOR NORMAN BENTWICH to believe that he has recently celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday is asking almost too much. For all that, it is duly recorded in *Who's Who* that he was born in 1883. The entry does not go on to add, as well it might, that he is "still going strong." There can be few men of his age more cheerful, more vital, more stimulating or more energetic than Norman Bentwich. The record of his achievements, both in the posts he has filled and the books he has published,

## COMMON GROUND

makes very impressive reading. But it is for the man himself that we are specially grateful. By nature a man of peace, he has sought at all times to exercise a "ministry of reconciliation" wherever he has been. Such men are sorely needed in the world today. We confess to being not altogether disinterested in wishing him, as we do most cordially, many happy returns of the day.

\* \* \* \*

We are not much given in this country to the observance of special "weeks." No one, however, could possibly object to what is now well on the way to becoming an annual fixture in the form of a CHRISTIAN AID WEEK. Organised by the Inter-Church and Refugee Service of the British Council of Churches, it is an attempt to enlist the support of people in all sections of the community on behalf of refugees and victims of all kinds of disaster in all parts of the world, regardless of creed or colour. So universal a good cause must surely command a universally generous response. The Lord Mayor of London is to launch the appeal at the Mansion House on April 23rd. Details of local events will be widely publicised. And the date? May 12th to May 17th. Please enter it in your diary.

\* \* \* \*

"Religious Freedom in America" is the legend on a new issue of a 3 cent AMERICAN POSTAGE STAMP which has just reached my desk. The design, printed in black, is of a quill pen, a Bible and a Quaker hat linked together by a scroll bearing the inscription: The Flushing Remonstrance. 1657 to 1957. This was the declaration in which the freeholders of the Long Island town of that name proclaimed their opposition to a Dutch ordinance forbidding them to harbour Quakers. That was in 1657. It is a tercentenary well worth celebrating for the world has still a long way to travel before the right to religious liberty for which many of our fathers were ready to sacrifice all they had is universally accepted.

### TOLERANCE AND THE JEWISH TRADITION

*The Fourth Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture*

*By*

**RABBI ALEXANDER ALTMANN, D.Phil., Hon.M.A.**

**Price 2s.0d.**

## About Ourselves

AS WE GO to press the Council's Annual General Meeting is just two days ahead. It promises, as always, to be a large and distinguished gathering, widely representative of the whole of our national life. Viscount Chandos, one of the Honorary Treasurers of the Council, and Chairman of the Associated Electrical Industries Ltd., will be the guest speaker, his theme being "Common Principles." We shall hope to print his address in our next issue.

IT IS WITH great regret that we report that the Chairman of the Council's Executive Committee, the Rev. Dr. Charles E. Raven, has felt obliged, for personal and domestic reasons, to tender his resignation. Dr. Raven has served the Council valiantly for many years, taking office shortly after the death of the founder-Chairman, the Rev. Henry Carter. He has been a constant source of strength to the Council in all its work, and his leadership has been valued by every member of the Executive. In addition the high regard in which he is held in the country as a whole has reflected credit on the Council, as on the many other causes on which he serves. We are grateful to him for all he has done for the Council as Chairman of its Executive, and we extend our greetings and best wishes to him for the future.

The Executive, in reluctantly accepting Dr. Raven's resignation, has nominated as his successor the Venerable Carl Witton-Davies, M.A., Archdeacon of Oxford. Archdeacon Witton-Davies has served on the Executive since shortly after his appointment in Oxford over a year ago, but his association with the Council goes back much further—indeed to 1949, when he returned to this country, as Dean of St. David's, from Jerusalem where he had for several years been Examining Chaplain to the Anglican Bishop. He is also a noted Old Testament and Hebrew scholar. We are sure that Archdeacon Witton-Davies will worthily fill the office of Chairman of the Executive, and we offer him our congratulations and good wishes for his term of office.

THE WILLESDEN AND HAMPSTEAD branches of the Council combined in a very successful Brains Trust on February 3rd. The next public meeting of the Willesden branch will be held on 26th March, in the Anson Hall, Chichele Road, N.W.2., when the speaker will be Lt.-Col. Eleanor Watson of the Salvation Army. The Annual General Meeting of the Willesden Council will be on May 14th, also at the Anson Hall, when a film show is also to be arranged. Further particulars of these and other meetings in Willesden may be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, Miss R. Phillips, 23 Marlow Court, Willesden Lane, N.W.6.

AS THIS IS BEING WRITTEN, the Council's Education Officer, Mr. A. I. Polack, is on his way, with Mrs. Polack, to visit members of their family now living in South Africa. We wish them a safe journey and a very happy family reunion. Arrangements have, of course, been made for Mr. Polack's work in schools and colleges to be carried forward in his absence, but his colleagues will eagerly look forward to his return early in June from this well-earned leave of absence.

ANOTHER very successful conference for clergy and ministers was held on February 10th, at Edgware. As with similar gatherings elsewhere, all those taking part showed a keen interest in the whole field of Jewish-Christian relations. A conference for teachers in Edgware and Hendon has already been arranged for May, and similar gatherings are in hand for Leeds, Hull, and other centres.

THE HAMPSTEAD Council of Christians and Jews has now held the first two of its series of meetings on "I believe in God," the first in the Hampstead Synagogue, and the second in the Parish Church. Both meetings drew large audiences, who were

## COMMON GROUND

appreciative both of the introductory addresses, by Dr. Levy and Canon Rogers respectively, and of the full discussion and questions which followed. The two other meetings in the series will be on Thursday, 27th March at the Friends Meeting House, and Thursday 17th April at St. Andrew's, Frognal, both at 8.15 p.m.

THE MEETING arranged by the Council of Christians and Jews during this year's Conference of Educational Associations drew a large and representative audience to hear Sir John Wolfenden speak on "Social Studies and Human Understanding." A summary of Sir John's address appears elsewhere in this issue of *Common Ground*.

THE MANCHESTER branch of the Council will have held its Annual General Meeting whilst this issue of *Common Ground* is being printed, on Wednesday, 12th March. The Lord Mayor of Manchester, Alderman Leslie Lever, M.P., is to preside over the meeting, which will be held in the Town Hall, and the speaker will be Judge Laski.

On February 1st the Manchester Council witnessed an interesting and

encouraging outcome of its past work, when about seventy boys, from the Ardenshaw Grammar School, and the Timperley Congregational Church Youth Group, attended morning service at the Synagogue of the Withington Congregation of Spanish and Portuguese Jews. After the service the visitors attended Kiddush in the new Synagogue Hall. It was, as the minister of the Synagogue, the Rev. M. Gaguine, said, a unique experience for all concerned, but a most worthwhile one, which it is hoped will be repeated.

WE REMIND our readers of the series of lectures arranged by the London Society of Jews and Christians in the King's Weigh House Church Hall, Binney Street, on "Outstanding Jewish and Christian Figures in Post-Biblical Times." The last lectures, on March 25th at 8.15 p.m., will deal with some contemporary personalities. The lecturers will be the Dean of St. Paul's and Rabbi Leslie Edgar. On Thursday, May 8th the Society will be arranging a tour of Wesley's Chapel and of a London Synagogue. Further particulars of this may be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, 28 St. John's Wood Road, N.W.8.

## Book Notes

### Living Bible Stories

By Dr. John Kennedy

(Andrew George Elliot, 7s. 6d.)

"Jolly good!" "Can we have another?" Such remarks as these, coming at the end of stories read to a class of boys, shows quite clearly that the writer of *Living Bible Stories* knows how to tell a story. We have to bear in mind when reading or telling bible stories to children that the story is likely to be familiar in one way or another. Especially today when many children have seen the best known

Old Testament stories beautifully dramatised on television. Therefore, there must be some new approach to the story in order to hold the attention.

Dr. Kennedy has without doubt achieved this. Many of the well-known stories are told from a new angle; the characters are well portrayed; the dramatic moments are high-lighted and linked in with the message of the story. In some cases the ending is perhaps a little abrupt, sooner than expected or wished for. But perhaps it is good to leave the reader wishing for more!

## BOOK NOTES

All the old favourites are here: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Elijah, Ruth, Daniel, Esther and Nehemiah. (Why, I sometimes wonder is the story of Ruth expected to appeal to young children?) I would like to suggest however that as Dr. Kennedy has done such a good piece of work on these familiar stories he should now give us some of the less familiar ones: stories of Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, for example, would be very welcome.

The illustrations are unusual and forceful. In some cases they throw quite a new light on old and familiar faces. Could they have been in colour they would have made an even greater appeal to young readers.

### Thoughts For Times Like These

By S. Ralph Harlow

(*Philosophical Library* \$3.00)

This stimulating little book contains a series of short homilies each based on two texts, one drawn from the Old, and the other from the New, Testament. Its aim is to show the relevance of the Judeo-Christian stream of thought to current religious, social and political problems. It is the work of a penetrating and generous mind and anyone who dips into these pages will be fortified in the daily struggle and face it with a lighter heart and a surer sense of direction.

### The Messianic Idea in Israel

By Joseph Klausener

(George Allen and Unwin, 30s.)

Professor Klausener's history of the Messianic Idea in Israel is from every point of view a very remarkable book. The story of its production must be almost unique for what is now Part III was written as long ago as 1902 as its author's doctoral dissertation at the University of Heidelberg. Part I was written between 1903 and 1908 and published in Cracow in 1909. Part II was published in 1921 in Jerusalem. Six years later the three parts would have been published together in

Jerusalem and finally, in 1954, fifty-two years after it was first conceived a new edition was published in the United States and has now, happily been published in this country.

It is its author's favourite work and as such is dedicated "to the memory of the first head of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, (Judah Magnes), all of whose deeds were for the glory of God." This is a matter of more than passing interest for, as Dr. Klausener himself tells us in his Preface, "in spite of all the differences of opinion between us, I learned to honour his nobility of soul and to value highly his splendid deeds."

The "differences of opinion" were over political issues in Palestine in the period immediately preceding the establishment of the State of Israel. Nevertheless these two men, in spite of their differences were bound together by their common concern with the problem of how far what was happening "in the land of vision and promise" was to be understood in terms of the Messianic idea which has never ceased to be operative in Jewish life.

The book itself has long since been the standard work on its subject. But, alas, it is all too little known and its appearance in this British edition encourages the hope that it may find many readers in Christian no less than in Jewish circles. Certainly no one with any interest in Christian origins and in the background of Jewish Messianic thought against which the early Christians wrestled with the problem of the Person of Jesus of Nazareth can afford to neglect it. The more so because in this latest edition Professor Klausener has included by way of Appendix an essay on "The Jewish and the Christian Messiah." The Christian may not agree with all the Professor has to say about the Christian concept of the Messiah, but he cannot fail to be stimulated by it.

But the book is also a very real contemporary interest and importance. This has already been hinted at in the reference to the common concern of Professor Klausener and Judah Magnes about the State of Israel. But this is our concern also. For, as its

author wrote in 1927 (twenty years before the establishment of the State of Israel), "Zionist social policy cannot be based on an authoritarian materialism, which brings about equality by deeds of violence; it must be prophetic, saturated with the Jewish Messianic idea, or else not be at all."

Time and again we are asked in the Council of Christians and Jews what has happened to the Messianic hope. Are Jews still looking for the coming of a Messiah, and if so what kind of person are they expecting. This book contains no "slick" and easy answer. But those who take their question seriously, who love their Bible and who are prepared to do some serious reading will find the study of Dr. Klausener's book richly rewarding.

### **Coloured Minorities in Britain**

*By Sydney Collins*

*(Lutterworth Press, 21s.)*

The mark of this book is that it enables us to see the coloured communities in Britain as it were from the inside. Dr. Collins has taken several different communities—Negro, Muslim and Chinese—and given us a picture of their origins and development in this country. The book is based on a survey which he personally undertook, covering settlements on Tyneside, in South Wales and in Lancashire. He gives us a kind of worm's eye view of each community—the type of people who formed the original immigrants—the "Old Timers"—and the "New Comers" of more recent years; the family and community associations which they have established; the changes that have taken place in the pattern of their work, from originally almost exclusively seafaring, to a more varied distribution in the ordinary occupations and trades of the district; and the effects on each community of their contact with the white majority.

Not the least valuable part of Dr. Collins' research is that he has shown how the character of different minority groups varies as a result of internal as well as external factors. The type of leadership, and the age distribution

within the group, has a very considerable influence not only on the coloured people themselves, but on the way in which they integrate with the general community. Dr. Collins has also shown the wide differences between the communities he has studied—Negro, Muslim and Chinese (and within the Negro group, between West Indians and Africans), and also the differences within each of these groups, depending on local circumstances and historical factors. Thus the negro community on Tyneside shows many completely different characteristics from that of South Wales.

The book is not primarily a study of race relations, but the understanding which Dr. Collins gives us of the coloured minorities themselves is essential to any serious study of racial problems.

One of the interesting findings so far as relations with white people are concerned is the difficulty which the coloured man has of knowing how he will be received in this country. In South Africa and in some parts of the United States, where there is a much more acute colour problem than has ever existed in Great Britain, the coloured man nevertheless knows exactly where he stands. There are some things which he may do, and some which he may not. In this country, however, the way in which he is accepted or rejected varies from place to place and from person to person. This uncertainty creates a sense of insecurity, and the tendency to avoid contacts where he is not sure of his reception.

The various communities with which Dr. Collins deals are all found in seaports and have their origins in the settlement of sailors and their families. Today many people are much more interested in the wider settlement of West Indian immigrant workers in inland towns. Dr. Collins recognises the importance of this development, and there is a post-script on recent West Indian immigration. It is to be hoped that he will find time in the future to make the same kind of survey of the West Indian workers as he has of the earlier seafaring immigrants.